



The Daily Whip

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2004

House Meets At...	Last Vote Predicted At...
10:00 a.m.: Legislative Business Unlimited "One Minutes"	1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

FLOOR SCHEDULE AND BILL SUMMARY

Suspensions (1 bill):

- 1) H.R. 4062** - To provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through June 4, 2004 (*Rep. Manzullo / Small Business Committee*)

H.Res. 581 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding rates of compensation for civilian employees and members of the uniformed services of the United States (*Rep. Tom Davis / Government Reform*) (Subject to a Rule). This measure expresses the sense of the House that pay increases should be the same this year for both civilian and military Federal personnel. The Rules Committee has recommended a closed rule that provides one hour of general debate and provides one motion to recommit which may not contain instructions. This bill:

- **Treats Federal Civilian Employees and Military Personnel Fairly.** Under both the President's FY04 budget and last week's House Budget Resolution, military personnel would receive an average 3.5% salary adjustment next year compared to a 1.5% adjustment for Federal civilian employees.
- **Promotes national security.** Civilian employees of the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense, FBI, CIA, and NSA are among the employees who will benefit from the pay parity resolution.
- **Continues established practice.** Congress has adopted the pay parity principle for military and civilian personnel for most of the past 20 years. Indeed, Congress voted as recently as January of this year to provide both our military and civilian federal employees with the same average pay raises for Fiscal Year 2004.
- **Puts the House on par with the Senate.** The Senate Budget Resolution for FY05 includes pay parity language stating "the rate of increase in the compensation of civilian employees should be equal to that proposed for the military." The House Budget Resolution adopted last Thursday does not, recommending instead that members of the military receive an average increase next year of 3.5% while Federal civilian employees would receive only 1.5%.
- **Prevents Federal employees from falling further behind.** The civilian public-private sector wage gap has been calculated to be as high as 32% in some areas of the country. A 3.5% adjustment helps keep this gap from widening.

Democrats are urged to VOTE YES.

H.R. 3550 - Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU) (*Rep. Young {AK} - Transportation & Infrastructure*) (Under Unanimous Consent with two hours and forty minutes of general debate). This bill authorizes \$275 billion over six years for highways, public transit, and safety and research programs, a 26% increase over the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. This bill exceeds the President's proposal by \$19 billion and is \$43 billion less than the Senate-passed bill. This bill also raises an additional \$17.7 billion for the bill by making changes to tax provisions.

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H.R. 3550 highlights include:

- Authorizes \$217.4 billion for highways, \$51.5 billion for public transit and approximately \$6 billion for various safety and research programs.
- Authorizes a total of \$11.1 billion for high priority projects requested by Members.
- Guarantees each state at least 90.5% return on the federal fuel taxes it pays.
- Contains a "reopener" provision that would cut-off funding for highway programs after September 30, 2005, unless a new law is enacted that would increase the guaranteed rate of return each year until it reached 95% in FY09.

Funding provisions include the following:

- Continues the revenue-aligned budget authority (RABA), under which the amount of money available for highway and transit projects would rise or fall based annual revenue coming into the Highway Trust Fund.
- Shifts the costs of the payments for the alcohol tax credits from the Highway Trust Fund to the general fund.
- Shifts the receipts from the tax on ethanol and the gas tax on motorboats and small engines from the general fund to the Highway Trust Fund.
- Places the fines collected from fuel tax evasion into the Highway Trust Fund.

The Unanimous Consent agreement reached yesterday allocates 2 hours and 40 minutes of general debate. Today, the House will use 2 hours and 30 minutes of this time and is expected to use the 10 remaining minutes tomorrow. In addition, tomorrow the House is expected to adopt a Rule for further consideration of this bill including any amendments.

TOMORROW'S OUTLOOK

The GOP Leadership has announced the following schedule: On Thursday, the House will meet at 10:00 a.m. and is expected to complete consideration of: **H.R. 3550** - Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (*Rep. Young{AK}* - Transportation & Infrastructure) (*Subject to a Rule*)

Daily Quote...

"In the 1990s, Republicans seemed to agree that budget discipline was good for the country. They supported a stricter version of this pay-as-you-go rule, they made sure it applied to the House as well as the Senate, and it did some good. But Republican leaders are no longer concerned about fiscal integrity. Making certain that tax cuts can be enacted and extended without any procedural hurdles has become the central -- you might say the only -- budgeting principle of the Bush administration and its congressional allies."

- *The Washington Post* in an editorial today

"The proposal [the Democratic Motion to Instruct budget conferees], on which 11 Republicans held fast in voting for responsible budgeting, was nothing more than a motion to reimpose the accounting process that brought fiscal sanity and ultimately surpluses to the runaway budgets of the 1990's. That the House leaders had to make such a desperate scramble was evidence that the skittish core of G.O.P. moderates realizes that voters are beginning to worry about the decade of deficit and debt being piled up by Mr. Bush's tax-cutting zeal."

-*The New York Times* in an editorial today